



Department of Justice

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Tampa

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr>

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PLEA ENTERED IN PRISON TAX REFUND RING

Tampa – Debra Robinson, age 46, of Ocoee, pled guilty yesterday to federal tax crimes related to the filing of false federal income tax returns by inmates and employees of Florida's prison system. Robinson faces a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment and a fine of \$100,000. Further, she will be subject to forfeit any proceeds of the fraudulently derived proceeds.

Ms. Robinson was indicted with six other individuals, Daniel Goodheart, Frankie Jackson, John Palmer, Tammi Sailem (aka Tammi Austin), Tammy Hutchinson and Vallis Sprenkle, on conspiracy charges for attempting to defraud the United States by filing fraudulent tax returns in an attempt to generate false tax refunds. According to the indictment, during the period of time from February 2002 to May 2003, Daniel Goodheart was employed by Wexford Health Associates and was a psychiatric counselor at Okeechobee Correctional Institution (CI) in Okeechobee, FL; Frankie Jackson was employed as a correctional officer; and John Palmer was an inmate at Okeechobee CI. Debra Robinson, Tammi Sailem, Vallis Sprenkle and Tammy Hutchinson were acquaintances of Palmer or other conspiring inmates. As part of the conspiracy, defendant Goodheart accessed the Florida Department of Corrections (DOC) intranet to retrieve names and social security numbers of Florida DOC inmates. These names and numbers were then used in the preparation of false income tax documents and returns for

prisoners at Okeechobee CI. These returns were then filed with the IRS and refunds subsequently generated were distributed to the conspirators. U.S. Treasury checks totaling \$902,487.87 were issued in amounts from \$1967 to \$4193 and were negotiated at banks or other depositories in Georgia and Florida including those located in Baxley, Valdosta, Okeechobee, Orlando, Ocoee, Port St. Lucie and St Petersburg.

This case was investigated by IRS Criminal Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Anthony Porcelli.

Additional information on Prison Refund Scams and the efforts of IRS-CI to combat them can be found at www.irs.gov/compliance&enforcement. See Questionable Refund Program.

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